

A Study of Women's Image in the Works Written by Contemporary American Chinese Female Writers

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Abstract: With the development of the times, the theme revealed and described by contemporary American Chinese female writers is mainly the current situation of American Chinese women. In their novels about female figures, the research on the themes of female figures has been continuously reproduced and has become the focus of social attention. Starting from the staged characteristics of the development of women's image in the literary works of American Chinese female writers, this paper deeply explores the cross-cultural women's images in the works written by American Chinese female writers.

1. Introduction

After the 1960s, with the development of the literary economy, the minority Chinese culture, including Chinese American female writers, began to receive widespread attention from the society. Because these literary works have unique perspectives, they have gradually become the focus of criticism under the development of postcolonial theory. With the development of the times, the works of contemporary Chinese-American women writers have begun to be more close to the actual needs of life and the development of the real society. From multiple perspectives, in-depth analysis of female images has pushed the development of Chinese-American literature to one climax after another. From the perspective of women, these American Chinese women writers aim to reproduce the real life of themselves and their mothers through their detailed records. In this way, the entire development history of Chinese Americans in the United States and some of its relatively traditional problems are constantly revealed, and the identity of American Chinese female culture is supplemented and gradually improved.

On the one hand, it can be said that the works of American Chinese female writers include the development history of their own growth and the selection, choice and practical integration of the development of Sino-American culture. On the other hand, the multiplicity and diversified development of cultural identity are more presented in her female literary works, and the contradiction between them is balanced through literary works. From the perspective of historical development, contemporary American Chinese women writers have their own third world. Compared with the developing male image, their literary works are mainly created from the perspective of female narration and development. Due to the dual identity from ethnic and gender cultures, the narration of American Chinese female writers' literary works are more about the contradiction and conflict between cultures or between languages. Their literary works even place more emphasis on the contradictions and conflicts between women's images, which concretely reflects the overall spiritual outlook of the development and survival of American Chinese female writers in different places.

2. Development Stage of Women's Images in American Chinese Female Writers' Literary Works

2.1 Early Development Stage

This period mainly refers to the period from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. At this stage of development, the female images of American Chinese female writers are more reflective of

the actual interests and corresponding identities of American minorities due to the influence of the social development in America. At that time, due to the civil rights movement and the struggle between blacks in American society, these were the opportunities that prompted Chinese American female writers to start writing. At this stage, the female images in their works are more vivid and the subjective consciousness presented is stronger. The portrayal of women's images is carried out in the form of literary criticism, and the legality of the existence of Asian American women is elaborated from the perspective of masculine development and the perspective of cross-cultural development. There were not many literary works about female images in this period, mainly represented by Jade Snow Wong's female works. The improvement of women's image at this stage is due more to its advancement in American society. They gradually integrated into the development of mainstream culture, and then actively created female characters with distinctive personality.

2.2 Transition Period

This period mainly refers to the period from the 1970s to the 1980s. During this period, American society experienced a wave of Asian-American movements and civil rights. American Chinese female writers have more absorbed the styles and actual narrative styles in different literary creations, and more often used autobiography and novels or poems to present developing female images. At this stage, works about women's images are full of orientation, focusing on fighting for more Asian rights, and some literary works have begun to reveal the developing Chinese culture.

2.3 Stage of Prosperity

This period mainly refers to the period from the late 1980s to early 1990s. The female images of American Chinese female writers at this stage more emphasized the development differences between the literatures and showed the mutual communication and integration between Asian countries and the development of American native culture. Among them, the female images in Maxine Hong Kingston and Tan Amy's literary works are representative. The female images in their works are prominent and distinctive, with a trend of diversified development. Their works mainly take the female image as the traditional narrative development mode. From the perspective of women, they focus on describing the daily life and actual life of American Chinese women in the United States.

3. Women's Image in the Works by American Chinese Female Writers

3.1 Creation of a Brand New Women's Image

Since the 19th century, American Chinese women writers have been committed to the practical shaping of women's new images. They tried to use the overall development of personality traits to describe female individuals, further breaking the weak female individual images described by male writers, shaping them into Chinese populations with actual temptation, and forming the overall female image structure. Among them, Daffodil is such an excellent American Chinese female writer. Her real name was Des Moud Eaton, and she is considered the first American Chinese woman writer in North America. Her father, Edward, was British, but she was actually a half-Asian female writer of Chinese descent. Daffodil once said: "I stretch my hand toward the west and the other hand toward the east. I hope that these two hands will not completely destroy the insignificant bridge between east and west." This is not only Daffodil's personal impression but also a beautiful vision for development of the world. Influenced by the image of Chinese people, the Chinese characters in her works are not regarded as clown characters in comedies, but Chinese with more realistic and emotional significance. Her most representative short story in the early days was "Mrs. Chunxiang", which was popular with mainstream American society and readers in 1912 and also received widespread attention in Canada.

Daffodil has created many Chinese women in her literary works. From her actual creation, it can be seen that her prejudice against traditional Chinese culture is different from some white writers. Most of her works revolve around women, in which she strives to show the kindness and noble

qualities of traditional Chinese women. Take “Mrs. Chunxiang” as an example, Mrs. Chunxiang is positive and optimistic, which not only makes people feel kind and lovely but also presents in her works a kind of courage to take responsibility and dare to pursue dreams. Although Mrs. Chunxiang refused to wear western clothes when she first came to the United States, she gradually adapted to American life in a short time. In the new living environment, she began to learn to think independently and was not controlled by her husband, and she became brave and rebellious. The image of the heroine in the work expresses that everyone can bravely pursue their own happiness and possess this right. This broke through the shackles of traditional Chinese culture and successfully demonstrated another brand-new image of a distinct American Chinese woman.

3.2 Shaping of a Model American Chinese Image

The second generation of Chinese female writers in early development began to work hard to find a developing bond, linking the American values of their lives with traditional Chinese values. This is because, on the one hand, due to the influence of the American public's perception of Chinese people, they strive to integrate their own national culture into the mainstream society of real life. By further positively introducing the representative traditional Chinese culture, they created a brand-new image for the ethnic Chinese as a whole, and were recognized and accepted by American society. Among them, Jade Snow Wong, known as the “Mother of Chinese American Literature”, is a vivid representative of this type of writer, which is reflected in her work “Sister Five”. It mainly tells the story about a Chinese woman who achieved success through continuous efforts, thus a model American Chinese woman is created. In the actual narrative of the work, only the distinctive qualities of the model ethnic groups in Chinese women are described, and to a certain extent, they have a tendency to meet the mainstream American culture. However, given the particular historical conditions at the time, we can understand it as the author’s attempt to correct the distorted Chinese image by using this autobiographical novel. During this period, writer Li Jinlan inherited Jade Snow Wong’s creative style and began writing autobiographical novels. Her work “House Built by Taiming” is very representative.

3.3 Shaping of the Image of a Strong and Assertive Woman

The most representative writer of this period was Hua Zhuang. She began to describe the image of American Chinese women from a new perspective-starting from the perspective of Chinese women suffering from certain ethnic and gender conflicts, pulling the background of the story into the emotional experience of Chinese women. His work focuses on the emotional experience of Jane, a young Chinese woman, and a married French journalist. In the choice of personal emotion and identity, the heroine faces a choice, whether she is Chinese or American. At first, her husband thought that she should be a gentle and patient woman with traditional Chinese women, but she did not fully meet the expectations of her husband. But when her husband thought she was Chinese and advised her to return to China, she realized that she had both Chinese and American identities, and finally found her own cultural identity. It can be seen that in Hua Zhuang’s works, women’s cultural image is more inclined to be shaped as strong and assertive, and they do not submit to traditional female images. Through this molding, Chinese women living in the United States is neither a simple Chinese nor an American, but Chinese Americans living in the United States.

3.4 Shaping of the Image of Women Who Pursue Free Spirit

The image of women in the works of Chinese American female writers is affected by cultural conflicts and women’s independence and self-worth development. What is more presented in the works is the developmental inheritance of traditional Chinese culture and the adoption of American culture. This is because their own growth history is a history of Sino-US cultural conflicts and collisions. The final development result is the inclusive development between the two cultures. The most representative work is “The Joy Luck Club”. The work illustrates the real suffering of mothers who have been affected by immigration, and these pains come from the conflict and differences between Chinese and Western cultures. The work mainly describes some Chinese people who have been baptized in suffering and came to the United States with a representative Chinese traditional

culture. However, due to the lack of language, their lives in the United States are deeply affected and their lives are more inconvenient. In her literary works, these influences are mainly reflected in two aspects: on the one hand, they have been separated from their families for a long time away from the motherland, and they have also been affected by conflicts in development between different cultures. The actual manifestation of this cultural conflict is achieved through realistic narratives of Chinese Americans. In the novel, a complex relationship between mother and daughter is presented to represent a seemingly irreconcilable conflict between Chinese and American cultures, and finally the situation of integration and development between cultures. "The Joy Luck Club" uses a variety of narrative angles to create an atmosphere of story development, and it also uses a variety of narrative results to further break the constraints of time and space and switch between different stories and different characters. In addition, its author, Tan Amy, uses the first-person approach to narrative, with a more unique perspective, highlighting several stories between the four Chinese mothers and daughters and weaving them together. In addition, Tan Amy also combines the advantages of the development of Chinese language and culture in her works, vividly showing the overall picture of the overall life of Chinese women. From the perspective of historical development, her works are more realistic and bring great spiritual comfort to the spiritual world of Chinese living overseas. The work further reflects the real spiritual world of the Chinese living overseas and shows concern for this special group. At the same time, the work further shows the distinctive personality image of Chinese American women with more vivid description.

In short, these works will not only help us better and deeper understand the development differences between Chinese and American cultures. At the same time, they have further improved intercultural communication and development capabilities, enabling Chinese Americans living in the United States to adopt a more rational attitude to meet the integration and symbiosis of different cultures in the context of globalization. These can inject inestimable vitality into the development and actual creation of Chinese culture, and promote the development and prosperity of different cultures.

4. Conclusion

The rich female images displayed by Chinese American writers in different periods and in different works reflect the changes of Chinese female images. They have gradually become mainstream culture from marginal culture, from self-awareness to independence, which is inseparable from their background. The United States is relatively tolerant of multiculturalism, and the protagonists in the works become carriers of different cultures. At the same time, American Chinese female writers pursue cultural identity in the process of self-creation. Through women's unique perspectives and narrative methods, these works explore the issue of minority self-identity in the context of heterogeneous cultures. This not only subverts the hegemony of mainstream culture, but also provides a future of unlimited development for the identity of ethnic minorities, and bridges cultural exchanges and dissemination. Thus, Chinese female literature is inherited and transcended, which promotes the development of Chinese female literature.

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